Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

★ JUN 1 1932 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

-2-

HHH

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Monday, June 13, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Canning for Economy." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Monday again. Another one of our saving days. And isn't it about time for more conversation about canning?

Somebody asked me last week if canning and preserving at home is always a paying proposition.

A good question for these thrifty times don't you think? So I saved it to discuss with you today.

Does it always pay to put up your own fruits and vegetables? The answer is "No, not always." To can or not to can, to preserve or not to preserve is the question each of us housewives has to decide for herself whenever a new crop of fresh products is ready. I've known plenty of times when home canned products turned out to be expensive, instead of economical, haven't you?

Take the strawberry jam Fanny Fuller made last summer. Remember about that? Fanny got the canning urge very early in the season and had a crate of strawberries sent out from the market. When she had made them into jam, she sat down with pencil and paper, happy as you please, to figure out how much money she had saved by making that jam herself. And what do you think she found out from those figures? That she hadn't saved a penny. Worse than that, her home-made jam had cost more per jar than the finest quality strawberry jam on the market. All her time and labor hadn't saved anything. She bought her berries at too high a price to warrant canning.

"I'll tell you this, Aunt Sammy," she told me afterward. "I've learned a lot from that experience. Nowadays I figure my prices first and do my buying and canning afterward. It certainly doesn't pay to can at home if commercially canned products, of just as good a grade are cheaper. And it doesn't pay to can if you can buy the fresh products during the winter more cheaply than you can put them up in the summer."

There is another time when it doesn't pay to do your own canning. That's when you haven't the right equipment to do a good job, or when you don't use the right methods for safety and success. Helter-skelter careless methods won't do, say the specialists. They are likely to mean waste from spoilage and even danger to health. Canning is one job which must be done in a scientific way. No use going to the work of putting up food if it won't taste good when you take it out of the jar, or, if it's likely to spoil and have to be thrown out. Of course, I don't need to mention the fact to you that spoiled food may be very dangerous to health.

Fortunately, specialists have been studying this matter of safe home canning for years. And they have learned the whys and wherefores of the process and stand ready to give us advice on every step in canning and preserving. No need for spoilage of good food with all this help at hand.

You have no idea how gloomy I feel each fall when the letters begin to come in telling about good food that has begun to spoil in the cans. My heart goes right down to my heels with a bump when I read a letter like this:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: I put up twenty jars of beautiful green beans from my garden last summer and already fifteen jars show signs of spoilage."

That lady didn't own a steam pressure cooker, so she canned those beans in a water bath. And they went to waste. The specialists are agreed that there's only one safe way to can non-acid vegetables or meats and that is under steam pressure.

Imagine the state of my spirits one dark day last November when the postman brought in a letter that went like this:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: Our berry bushes produced such delicious red raspberries this year that I put up a large number of them - enough, I thought, to last all winter. Now, on opening them, I find that they taste queer and seem to be moldy on top."

As a result of those letters, I'm beginning early in the season this year to entreat you to can according to science. If you want me to be cheerful all next winter, I hope you'll do your canning carefully,

Home canning does pay dividends when it's done by safe methods and when the fruit or vegetables you use cost very little. If you have your own berry patch, fruit orchard and vegetable garden, if there are abundant crops that the family can't use fresh while the season lasts, then it certainly is economy to put the surplus away in cans for winter meals.

How shall we put up our surplus berries, for example? Yes, I know berries won't be ready in some parts of the country for quite a while but Southern housewives are already asking questions about canning them.

Here's what the specialists have to say:

Blackberries, blueberries, dewberries, huckleberries, loganberries, raspberries--in fact, the whole berry family may be treated alike when it comes to canning. Berries are so juicy that they should never be diluted with water. Otherwise, the can will seem full of liquid with only a few

berries floating on top. For good color and a full pack in the jars, cook the berries first in a kettle, with sugar but with no water. One-fourth to one-half pound of sugar for each pound of fruit, depending on the sweetness of the berries. For finest flavor, be careful not to make them too sweet. Put the sugar and fruit together in a kettle and stir them ever so gently as they heat to the boiling point. Then boil them for five minutes. Now fill the jar as full as possible with the berries, and add only as much juice as you need to fill in around the fruit. Though you use no water in cooking the berries, you'll have juice left over in the kettle after the jars are filled.

What to do with this extra juice? Pour it in empty jars and process it right along with the jars of berries. It will make delicious cold summer beverages, or you can use it for ices and sherbets, for gelatin desserts and for sauce to serve over frozen desserts and puddings.

Well, there we have our jars of berries and jars of pure juice all ready filled for processing. The specialists advise doing that job this way:

Seal the jars and place the filled or sealed jars while they are still hot in the hot canner and process at the boiling temperature for five minutes. Lift the jars out and allow them to cool out of direct draft. Then turn upside down to test the seals. Then the berries will be evenly distributed through the juice.

That's all about canning today. I'll take up the subject again in a few days.

Shall we talk about cherries next? All right. In the meantime I'll go over and find out what the canning specialists have to say about the best methods of canning cherries.

The usual feature of our Monday chats is ready if your pencils are: Yes, our feature is another economy meal for the family. Ready? Here's the menu: First that good old-time favorite, corned beef hash. With it serve buttered new cabbage and spring onions or radishes. For dessert Boston cream pie. That's the meal.

Please be sure to cook your cabbage in boiling salted water in an open kettle until it's just tender. That will give it the best flavor and the good looks it ought to have.

But I really didn't intend to spend my time on cabbage. I wanted to tell you about a pie which isn't a pie. Sounds like a conundrum, doesn't it? When is a pie not a pie? The answer is: When it's Boston cream pie. For this is really just a cake with a cream filling. You know they do things differently in Boston. They have their own old customs and their own special names for all sorts of things --food included. So there's no use being surprised that they named a cake a pie. Anyway it is a good and very inexpensive dessert. And I'm about to give you a recipe for it.

First, make a simple layer cake so you'll have two nice round layers. ready when you've made the filling. There are eight ingredients in the filling. Eight.

1 cup sugar
7 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 pint milk
2 eggs
2 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons lemon juice
Grated rind of 1 lemon

I'll repeat that list. (Repeat.)

Mix the sugar and flour thoroughly. Heat the milk in a double boiler and add the salt. Pour the heated milk into the flour-and-sugar-mixture and cook over the flame until thickened. Place in a double boiler, cover, and cook for 15 minutes. Stir this hot mixture slowly into the well beaten eggs, cook for 2 or 3 minutes longer, and add the butter. When the filling is cold, add the lemon juice and rind and spread the filling between layers of cake. Sprinkle powdered sugar over the top of the cake and serve.

If you prefer use vanilla, almond or other flavoring in place of the lemon juice and rind.

Tomorrow: "The ways of the Carpet Beetle."